DARK HORSE COMICS

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3 OF 3

FROM THE PAGES OF THE GOON

BUZZARD

BY ERIC POWELL

★ ALSO FEATURING ★

BILLY THE KID'S OLD TIMEY ODDITIES

BY POWELL AND HOTZ

DIRECT SALES

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BUZZARD

NUMBER THREE

BY ERIC POWELL
COLORS BY DAVE STEWART
LETTERS BY ERIC POWELL & NATE PIEKOS

BILLY THE KID'S
OLD TIMEY ODDITIES
& THE PIT OF HORRORS

PART THREE OF THREE

BY ERIC POWELL AND KYLE HOTZ
COLORS BY DAN BROWN
LETTERS BY NATE PIEKOS AT BLAMBOT®

COVER ART BY ERIC POWELL

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publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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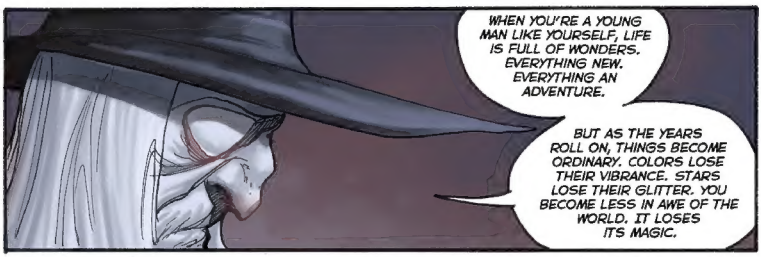
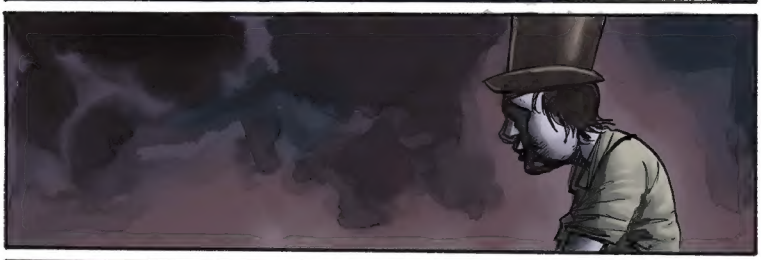
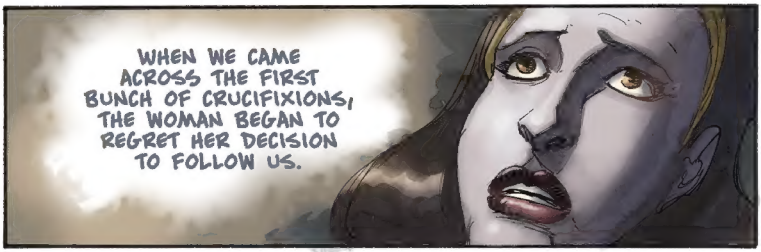
ME, THE BOY, AND THE WOMAN CONTINUED TO HEAD WEST, WHERE THE LAND STARTED TO BECOME FOUL.
I GOT A FEELING OUR TRIP IS GETTING CLOSE TO THE END, BOY.
YEP, ME TOO.

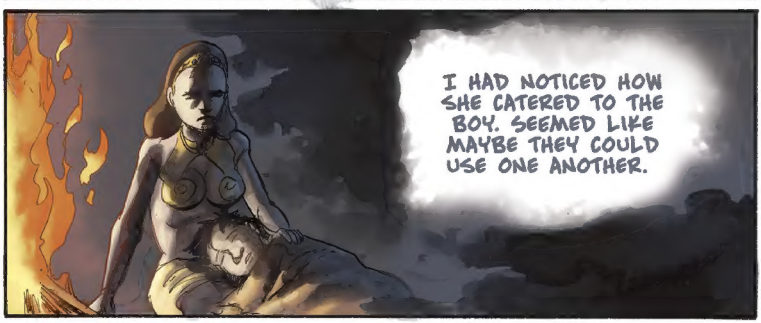
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SAD?
WHAT'S THAT?
I AIN'T NEVER SEEN YOU LAUGH ONCE OR EVEN SMILE. SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE SAD MOST OF THE TIME.
I HAVE KNOWN HAPPINESS IN MY TIME. I HAVE, BUT IT'S A DISTANT MEMORY.
I DON'T THINK I WAS MELANCHOLY BY NATURE, BUT LIFE PILES ON A MAN THE LONGER HE LIVES. WEIGHS HIM DOWN.


WHEN YOU'RE A YOUNG MAN LIKE YOURSELF, LIFE IS FULL OF WONDERS. EVERYTHING NEW. EVERYTHING AN ADVENTURE.
BUT AS THE YEARS ROLL ON, THINGS BECOME ORDINARY. COLORS LOSE THEIR VIBRANCE. STARS LOSE THEIR GLITTER. YOU BECOME LESS IN AWE OF THE WORLD. IT LOSES IT'S MAGIC.

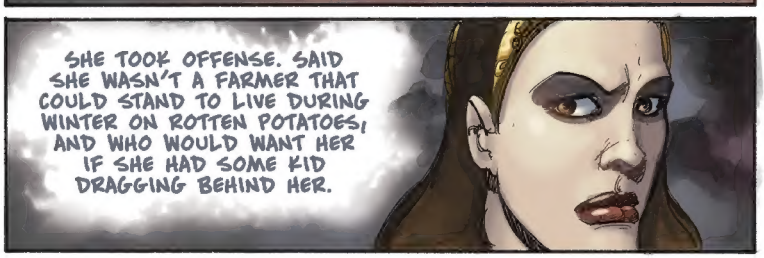
I DON'T SEE THIS AS A PAINFUL THING. I THINK IT'S A MERCY.
I BELIEVE IT'S ALL JUST SO IT MAKES IT EASIER TO LET THE WHOLE THING GO WHEN IT'S OUR TIME TO PASS ON. BUT WHEN YOU'VE LIVED AS LONG AS I HAVE, THE WEIGHT OF THE YEARS AND THE TARNISHED LUSTER OF THE WORLD CAN BREAK YOU DOWN. AND IT'S HARD TO BE ALIVE AND BE SO BROKEN.




WHEN WE CAME ACROSS THE FIRST BUNCH OF CRUCIFIXIONS, THE WOMAN BEGAN TO REGRET HER DECISION TO FOLLOW US.


I HAD NOTICED HOW SHE CATERED TO THE BOY. SEEMED LIKE MAYBE THEY COULD USE ONE ANOTHER.

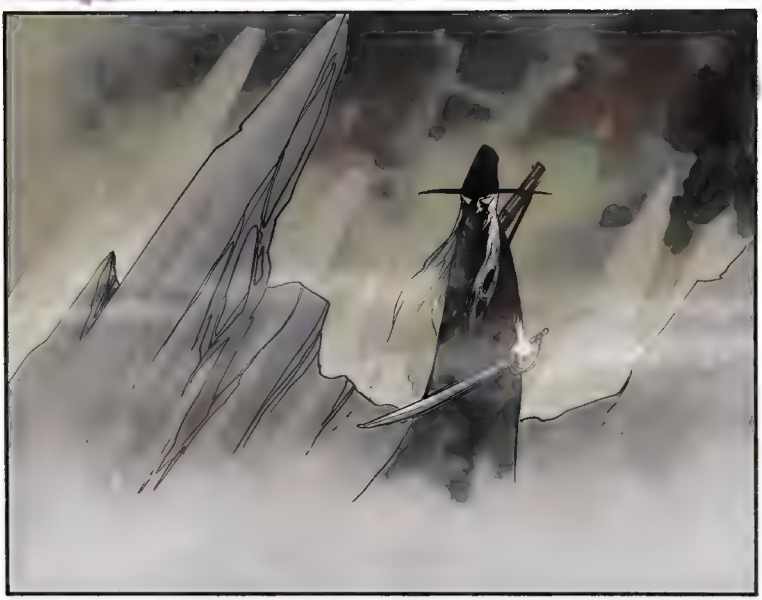
SO I TOOK HER ASIDE AND TOLD HER THAT MAYBE IT WOULD BE BEST IF SHE TOOK THAT BOY AND HEADED EAST. STOP BEING A WHORE AND RAISE THAT BOY LIKE A MOTHER.


SHE TOOK OFFENSE. SAID SHE WASN'T A FARMER THAT COULD STAND TO LIVE DURING WINTER ON ROTTEN POTATOES, AND WHO WOULD WANT HER IF SHE HAD SOME KID DRAGGING BEHIND HER.

SHE DID TAKE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE. SHE LIT OUT BACK EAST SOMETIME DURING THE NIGHT.
GUESS SHE THOUGHT I WOULD FORCE THE BOY ON HER.
THAT OR SOMETHING DRUG HER AWAY IN THE NIGHT.

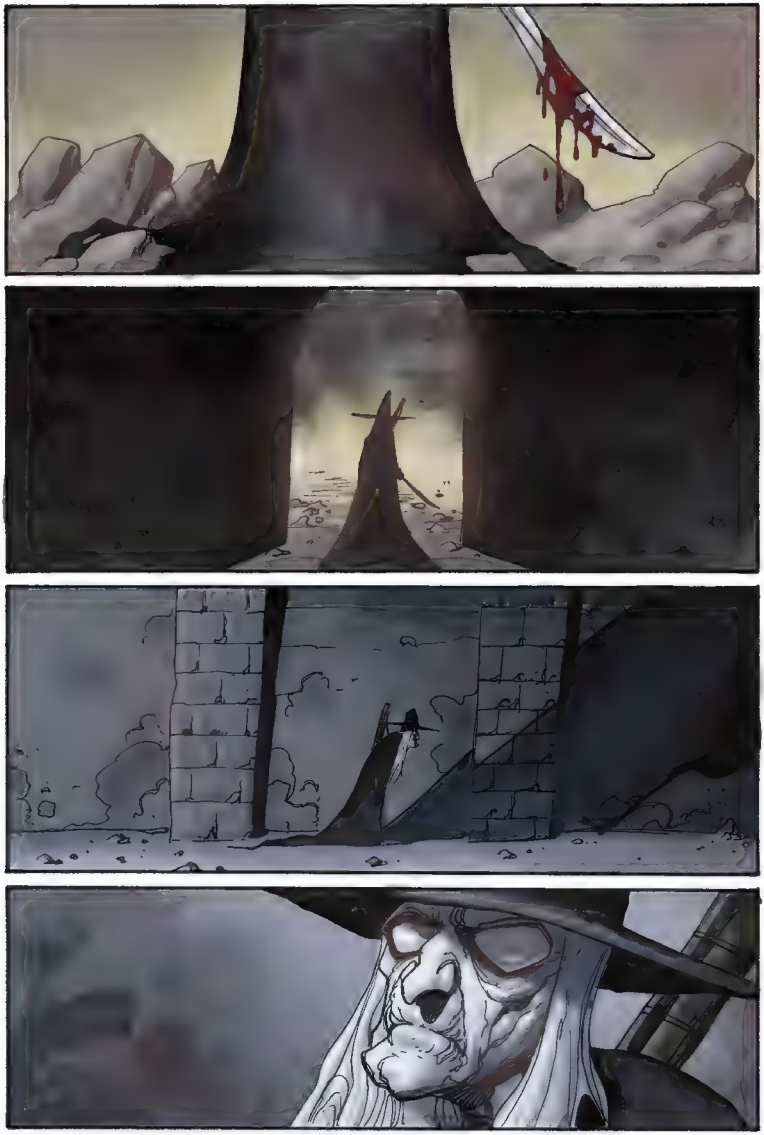
I KNEW THE BOY AND I HAD GOTTEN TO WHERE WE WERE GOING WHEN THE SMELL GOT AS BAD AS IT DID.
THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE TEMPLE.

YOU STAY HERE WITH THE HORSE. LAY HIM DOWN AND STAY BEHIND HIM. HE'LL LISTEN TO YOU. KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN AND KEEP QUIET. THEM MANGLED THINGS WILL LIKELY PASS YOU BY SEEING AS IT'S JUST A DEAD ANIMAL.
BUT... BUT WHAT IF YOU DON'T COME BACK?
IF THE SUN COMES UP AND I AIN'T BACK, GET ON HIS BACK AND RIDE OUT OF HERE AS QUICK AS YOU CAN.
JUST DON'T GO BACK TO THAT TOWN OF YOURS. FIND SOME FOLKS WITH MORE SENSE TO LIVE WITH.



I FOUND IT EASIER THAN I THOUGHT TO MAKE IT TO THE PLACE. SOME OF THEM THINGS TRIED TO GIVE ME SOME TROUBLE...

...BUT I HANDLED THEM PRETTY QUICK.

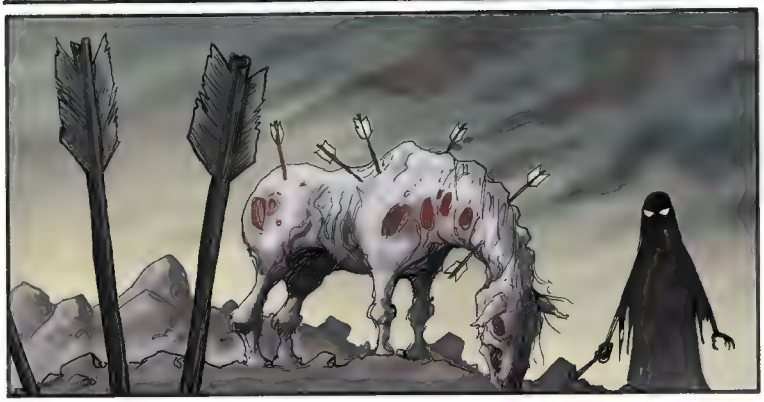


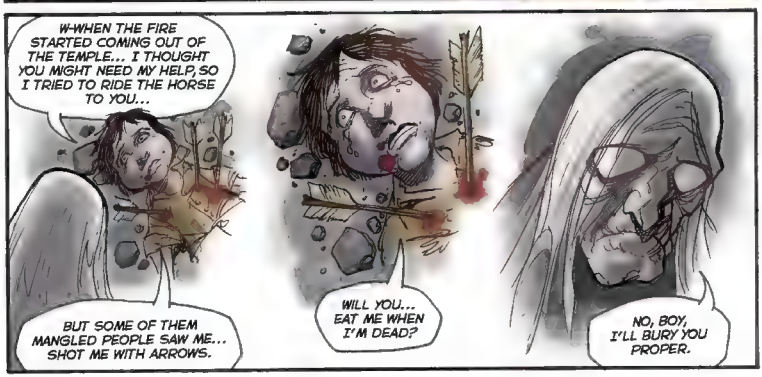
I HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT DEATH WAS ON THE ROAD SEEKING ME. ARE YOU HIM? I HAVE TO SAY I'M SURPRISED. THESE SUPERSTITIOUS PEOPLE WILL SAY ANYTHING.
IT'S A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY.
HMMM. PERHAPS.
BUT I HAVE COME TO KILL YOU. THAT IS, IF YOU DON'T KILL ME FIRST.

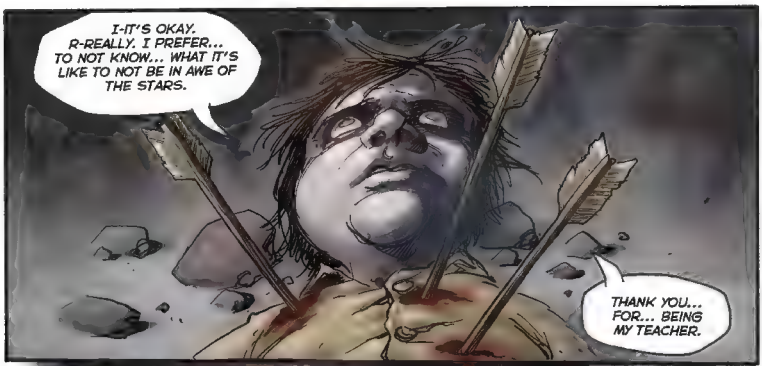
KILL YOU? WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THAT? I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
DO YOU KNOW WHY I DO THIS TO THEM? BOREDOM.
I HAD HOPED THAT AT SOME POINT THEY WOULD FIGHT BACK. DO SOMETHING.
I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. THEY ARE A COWARDLY LOT IN THIS LAND.

I HAD HOPED THAT'S HOW I WOULD END. I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY.
NOW THE EONS OF MY LIFE ARE BUT A TANGLE OF MEMORIES AND LOSS. I AM SO VERY TIRED. I WELCOME DEATH. KILL ME IF YOU ARE ABLE BECAUSE I CANNOT DO IT MYSELF.
YOU SEE, WHEN I WAS BORN, THE TREES AND STONE AND SEAS WERE SINGING THEIR FIRST SONG. LIGHT WAS A NEW THING WHEN I FIRST OPENED MY EYES AND BEHELD IT.
YOU WILL DEFEND YOURSELF, DAMN YOU!
AS ONE WHO HAS LIVED LONG BEYOND HIS RIGHT, I CAN SEE THE SAME SUFFERING ON YOU. YOU CAME HERE FOR THE SAME REASON I WELCOMED YOU, DIDN'T YOU? TO END OUR LIVES.
I CAME HERE WITH NO NOTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT I COULD FIND PEACE, BUT THE HOPE WAS THERE. AND I INTEND TO FIND OUT IF YOU CAN KILL ME!
I SWEAR TO YOU THAT I WILL TRY MY BEST TO END YOU, IF YOU GIVE ME YOUR WORD YOU'LL DO THE SAME.
LET US COMPROMISE THEN, AND IN THE END, AS ALWAYS IS SO, FATE WILL BE OUR JUDGE.
AGREED.

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENED. IN THE END, THE GOD WAS DEAD AND I WAS STILL ALIVE.




W-WHEN THE FIRE STARTED COMING OUT OF THE TEMPLE... I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED MY HELP, SO I TRIED TO RIDE THE HORSE TO YOU...
BUT SOME OF THEM MANGLED PEOPLE SAW ME... SHOT ME WITH ARROWS.
WILL YOU... EAT ME WHEN I'M DEAD?
NO, BOY, I'LL BURY YOU PROPER.



AFTER I BURIED THE BOY I RODE BACK INTO THE MIST.

IT MOMENTARILY PARTED OVERHEAD TO EXPOSE THE NIGHT SKY. I LOOKED UP AT THE STARS AND REMEMBERED A TIME WHEN I WAS IN AWE OF THEM.

THE END

WE'LL FOLLOW DOWN BEHIND YOU.
DON'T. I GOT A FEELIN' IF I DON'T COME BACK UP WITH THE BOY ALONE, WOULDN'T NONE OF US COME BACK UP NO HOW.
BILLY THE KID'S OLD TIMEY OUBITOS & THE PIT OF HORRORS
PART THREE
BY POWELL & HOTZ
OH, PLEASE, WILLIAM.
IF THERE IS ANYTHING I SHOULD BE SUITED FOR, IT'S CLIMBING.
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?
NOTHING GOOD.
JEFFREY?! JEFFREY, DO YOU HEAR ME, BOY?!
MR. KID! HELP!

GIMME BACK 'AT BOY, YA FAT-HEADED BABY!
BOM
GAHHHH! LEAVE MY CHILD ALONE!
GET YER HANDS OFF ME! I WILL SMACK YOU IN THE MOUTH, YA FLYIN' DEVIL-WOMAN!
WOMAN, SEE HERE!

THRAA!!
AAAA

TO THE WAGON! NOW!
AAAAAHH!
FASTER! FASTER, BILLY!

IHR DA! WAS MACHT IHR IN DIESEM WALD?*
WHAT ARE YA, CRAZY?! I NEARLY RUN YA DOWN!
*YOU THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THAT FOREST?
I'M SORRY, SIR. SPRECHEN SIE NEIN DEUTSCH.
AH! YOU ARE ENGLISH! THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU WOULD BE SO STUPID AS TO TRAVEL THROUGH THAT FOREST.
STUPID?!
YES, WE DID ENCOUNTER SOMETHING STRANGE IN THE FOREST.
I DO NOT DOUBT! IT'S HAUNTED!
"LONG AGO A WELL-TO-DO ENGLISHMAN WAS TRAVELING THROUGH THAT FOREST WITH HIS WIFE AND INFANT CHILD WHEN THEY WERE ATTACKED BY BANDITS.
"THE CRUEL BANDITS KILLED THE FATHER AND DID UNSPEAKABLE THINGS WITH THE BODY, BUT EVEN MORE TERRIBLE IS WHAT THEY DID TO THE MOTHER AND CHILD.

"THEY THREW THEM IN A DEEP PIT AND CAMPED AROUND THE EDGE OF THE HOLE."
PLEASE, PLEASE! MY BABY IS HUNGRY!
"WHEN THE WOMAN'S DEPLETED BODY COULD NO LONGER PROVIDE MILK FOR THE CHILD, SHE FED THE INFANT HER OWN PRECIOUS BLOOD. THEY MOCKED AND LAUGHED AT HER WHILE DEVOURING THE FLESH OF HER HUSBAND AS SHE AND HER CHILD STARVED TO DEATH."
THE BANDITS SHOWED NO PITY. THEY BOTH PERISHED. AND SINCE THEN THAT FOREST HAS BEEN A PLACE OF EVIL. IT IS SAID THAT THE WOMAN HAS BECOME AN UNDEAD WITCH THAT SEARCHES THE ROAD FOR TRAVELERS TO FEED TO HER STARVING CHILD.
DEAR LORD!
THAT SEEMS ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.
WELL, AFTER THAT I RECKON LONDON WON'T BE SO BAD!
AAAAAAAHHH!
TO BE CONTINUED IN
BILLY THE KID'S OLD TIMEY ODDITIES!

JULY 2010

HORSEPOWER!

LOVE AND WONDER ARE TWO WORDS WE BELIEVE IN AT DARK HORSE MANGA—you might say we believed in them long before it was fashionable. Back in 1994, there was this home-video commercial that expressed the image of "manga" in the early nineties, for it featured a mascot named "Manga Man." Manga Man wasn't, as you might assume, big eyed and tousle haired. He looked more like a *Judge Dredd* villain—bald, scarred, teeth clenched, one eye covered by a monocle with cross hairs—and he screamed "*MAIN-GAH!!!*"—shifting his vowels and striking terror.

So now you can understand that when, sixteen years ago, Dark Horse premiered what is to this day our longest-running series, Kosuke Fujishima's *Oh My Goddess!*—with its saga of a nice-guy college student, and his beautiful and literally divine girlfriend—well, its content would have been shocking to some. I mean, there was no disembowelment. People were sipping tea, not coughing bile, and hunting for nice apartments instead of killer cyborgs.

This kind of paradigm shift, from blood and terror to love and wonder, can be seen at work in one of our most recent ongoing manga series, Osamu Takahashi's *Neon Genesis Evangelion: The Shinji Ikari Raising Project*. As the original *Evangelion* anime of the nineties ended in a literal apocalypse, it is sometimes forgotten today that the series also featured romantic comedy and gag humor, and that the final episode imagined what its characters might be like if they had been allowed to live happier lives—exactly the scenario *The Shinji Ikari Raising Project* plays out.

Clover, *Chobits*, and *Cardcaptor Sakura* are recent and upcoming Dark Horse titles by CLAMP, a partnership between four manga creators—Satsuki Igarashi, Mokona, Tsubaki Nekoi, and Nanase Ohkawa. CLAMP have brought their sensibilities developed in *shojo* manga—with its emphasis on turning emotion into action—to an international crossover readership of men and women alike.

We see this in *Clover*, set in a lush, baroque world of retro technology, where CLAMP uses the personal life of a special-forces agent to examine what love means when one partner (but not the other) knows that they are facing death. CLAMP's *Chobits*, about future love between people and the artificial humanoids called "persocoms," departs from the abstract SF debate about the humanity of robots to suggest the relevant question would be not what both sides truly are, but what they really feel about each other. *Cardcaptor Sakura*, a magical girl classic (and one might also say, a *shojo* take on how to do superheroes), is an action-packed saga that is also, in the words of *The Complete Manga Guide*, "about love in all its many forms: sibling love, childhood crushes, unrequited love, true love."

Few Dark Horse creators express love and wonder together so sumptuously as Mi-Kyung Yun, in her ongoing *manhwa* series *Bride of the Water God*. Its heroine Soah's struggle for love amidst the intrigues of the divine realm contains touches of modern humor and irony, but also references the classic romantic poetry of East Asia that contemplates the wonders of the earth and sky. In reading such scenes in *Bride*, you realize how much of the roots of fantasy are to be found in the fascinations of the real world, and that this wonder is open to anyone who will go halfway to meet it.

Love and wonder is that strange kind of adventure where the quest is for a midpoint, and the hope is finding someone who came there with the same desire. There are no guarantees; that is exactly what makes these Dark Horse stories—and this life—adventures, and not mere fairy tales.

—Carl Horn
Editor

You LOVE COMICS! WE LOVE COMICS, Too!

Mac Walters, lead writer at BioWare, has been hooked on interactive stories since first using a Commodore PET as a wee lad. Despite coming late to comics—blame video games—Mac's made up for lost time with the hit *Mass Effect* series, where he's enjoyed the novelty of writing a single ending per story.

DH alum (13 years!) **Dan Jackson** recently branched out on his own as a freelance colorist. He's a talented and very reliable guy, and we have to say, WE MISS HAVING YOU AT HQ, DAN! (Sorry for the yelling . . . had to make sure Dan could hear us over all that insane metal music.) Rocker salute!

DARK HORSE COMICS

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